



Ministry of Defence

19 October 2021

Mr John Worne
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Dear Mr Worne,

Thank you for your letter of 11th August 2021. Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your letter.

We owe a debt of gratitude to interpreters and other Locally Employed Staff (LES) who risked their lives working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan and believe that nobody's life should be put at risk because they supported the UK Government in Afghanistan.

On the 1 April 2021 we launched a new Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). It was developed to acknowledge and reflect the fact that the situation in Afghanistan has changed, and with it the potential risk to current and former Locally Employed Staff who have worked for the UK Government over the past twenty years.

The Government is strongly committed to fulfilling its responsibilities to current and former LES in Afghanistan and the ARAP is one of the most generous in the world. Around 2,000 people were relocated under the ARAP scheme after 22 June and before the start of Op PITTING. In total the UK evacuated around 15,000 people, from Afghanistan between 15-29 August under Op PITTING.

Of these, up to 5,000 were Afghan LES and their families relocated under the ARAP and around 8,000 were British Nationals and their families. The balance were largely Third Country Nationals.

These figures continue to be refined as the resettlement programme continues noting a significant number originally identified as ARAP arrived with little or no documentation and have been recategorized since as either British Nationals or Third Country Nationals.

It is a deep source of regret that some of those eligible for relocation to the UK were not evacuated during Operation PITTING, which concluded on 28 August. Our commitment to those who are eligible under the ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure. The scheme remains open and we are now looking at all possible avenues to ensure that any British nationals and local staff remaining in Afghanistan, as well as at-risk individuals who have already been offered a visa to the UK, are able to leave safely if they wish to.

Where we have managed to evacuate people to the UK who are not covered by ARAP or otherwise entitled to remain in the UK, they will fall under the new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

The Home Office is working quickly to establish the details of the ACRS. This scheme will provide protection for Afghan citizens identified as most at risk, such as women and girls. The Government has committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and 20,000 over the coming years, making this one of the most comprehensive resettlement schemes the UK has ever established.

Under the previous Ex Gratia Scheme (EGS) eligible staff were offered a generous ex-gratia redundancy package in recognition of service, one option available was relocation to the UK with approximately 1500 former staff including their families relocated to the UK and over 350 other former staff benefitted from our in-country finance and training packages.

I hope this reassures you of the UK's continued commitment to the people of Afghanistan.

Yours sincerely,

PJHQ J9 Secretariat